Immigration and Economic Restructuring in Ohio's Cities, 1940-2000[1]

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ABSTRACT. The purpose of this research is to use Census data to examine trends in employment and the foreign-born among Ohio's largest cities between 1940 and 2000. The observed trends are linked to economic changes in the cities. In 1940, many Ohio cities attracted significant numbers of foreign-born due to job opportunities in manufacturing. However, since 1940, employment and spatial restructuring has eroded the manufacturing base of most Ohio cities, making them less appealing to the newer immigrant streams. Another change is that Columbus has overshadowed Cleveland as the primary location of the foreign-born population since 1940. Columbus is now more attractive to immigrants because it has a greater concentration of jobs in the growing service and information employment sectors than does Cleveland. Columbus' large foreign-born population is also partly due to the refugee resettlement policies of the US government, especially in the case of Somalis. Columbus is now the second largest center of Somalis in the US. Ohio cities' ability to attract immigrants, who are critical to population and economic growth, depends on the cities' ability to nurture industries that will generate the jobs that will draw immigrants. In addition, some researchers believe that amenities, such as cafes, museums, and diversity, are critical to attract migrants, both domestic and foreign-born. Thus, investments in the cultural environment and human talent cannot be overlooked.

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INTRODUCTION

Migration, whether local or international, is important to population growth in many cities across the US because of declining or stable population growth through natural increase. For example, Glaeser and Shapiro (2001) reported that during the 1990s foreign-born residents contributed substantially to urban growth among cities with a population over 100,000. Cities, including those in Ohio, wishing to stabilize or grow their populations, especially to offset losses attributable to suburbanization and deindustrialization, may look to attracting foreign-born persons as one source of growth.

In the early 1900s, most Ohio cities, such as Cleveland, being part of the industrial core, attracted significant numbers of immigrants from Europe, especially Italy and Eastern Europe (Warf and Holly 1997). Not only was this aided by the state's abundant industrial jobs, but also by the state's strategic location in the Great Lakes region, in the Ohio River valley, and on the major east-west railway corridors. With such assets, Ohio was able to attract immigrants, though relatively less compared to national gateway states such as New York and Illinois. In the last few decades, however, Ohio cities' attractiveness to immigrants has declined drastically. For example, Cleveland's inability to attract immigrants in recent years was lamented by Smith and Davis (2002, p 8) in *The Plain Dealer*: "…Cleveland missed out on a historic opportunity to replenish its ranks. Last decade, America saw its greatest burst of immigrants since the early 1900s. Some 13 million immigrants arrived, mostly from Latin America and Asia. A century ago, Cleveland took a lion's share of the new talent. This time, however, the newcomers bypassed Cleveland for other Midwest cities, including Chicago, Indianapolis and Columbus."

The purpose of this research is to examine trends in the foreign-born among Ohio's largest cities between 1940 and 2000, with a particular focus on the changing roles of Cleveland and Columbus as the dominant location of foreign-born persons in Ohio. The changes in the pattern of foreign-born location in Ohio will be linked to economic changes in the cities as well as changing immigration patterns.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data describing the cities' total populations, numbers of foreign-born residents, total employment, and employment in manufacturing were collected from the US Census for the respective years. Cities were selected as the geographic unit of analysis instead of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). In part, this is because MSAs did not exist in 1940. In addition, some MSAs include a substantial rural population. The drawback of city data is that they exclude the suburbanized population. Nonetheless, cities seemed to be the most suitable geographic units for this study.

The major trends in the various Census data for each city are described. Those trends are then related to changes in the employment structures of the cities and the nature of the immigration process.

RESULTS

Foreign-Born

In 1940, some of Ohio's cities attracted comparatively high percentages of foreign-born persons (Table 1). In fact, Cleveland's 1940 rate of 20.5% was more than double the national average of 8.8%. Moreover, Akron and Youngstown's rate were above the national average at 10.4% and 15.9%, respectively. In contrast, the percentages for Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, and Toledo were lower. The respective percentages for Cincinnati, Dayton, and Toledo were 5.7%, 4.4%, and 8.8%, and

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TABLE 1

*Urban data.**

City	Year	Total Population	Total Employment	% Total Employment in Manufacturing	% Foreign-Born
Akron	1940	244,791	82,558	48.3	10.4
	1950	273,710	118,080	45.1	7.6
	1960	290,351	109,936	44.0	6.0
	1970	275,420	104,825	38.4	4.4
	1980	237,177	95,086	29.6	3.7
	1990	223,019	94,103	20.7	3.1
	2000	217,088	99,310	18.6	3.2
Cincinnati	1940	455,610	169,970	32.0	5.7
	1950	502,010	201,702	31.6	4.1
	1960	502,550	189,604	29.4	3.3
	1970	452,376	174,900	27.9	2.7
	1980	385,457	159,396	22.3	2.8
	1990	364,040	158,881	15.4	2.8
	2000	330,662	150,574	12.3	3.8
Cleveland	1940	878,336	319,582	40.5	20.5
	1950	912,840	390,423	42.4	14.6
	1960	876,050	338,178	40.8	11.0
	1970	750,932	286,784	37.5	7.5
	1980	573,822	213,852	33.2	5.8
	1990	505,616	182,225	23.1	4.1
	2000	478,393	180,459	18.2	4.5
Columbus	1940	306,087	112,447	24.0	3.9
	1950	362,205	153,803	25.3	2.9
	1960	471,316	181,232	25.9	2.3
	1970	539,469	218,683	23.0	2.1
	1980	564,866	261,852	16.7	2.9
	1990	632,958	325,088	11.6	3.7
	2000	711,644	374,892	8.9	6.7
Dayton	1940	210,718	81,616	44.8	4.4
	1950	243,050	105,650	43.2	3.3
	1960	262,332	102,823	36.4	2.3
	1970	243,405	96,889	36.8	1.7
	1980	203,371	72,704	23.8	2.0
	1990	182,044	70,730	18.6	1.4
	2000	166,153	69,126	16.3	2.0
Toledo	1940	282,349	99,209	36.0	8.8
	1950	303,725	124,912	38.2	6.6
	1960	318,003	119,126	34.3	4.8
	1970	384,067	151,217	33.2	3.2
	1980	354,635	141,698	25.5	3.1
	1990	332,943	141,298	19.6	2.8
	2000	313,587	140,270	18.4	3.0
Youngstown	1940	167,720	56,229	46.8	15.9
	1950	168,065	67,749	46.2	12.8
	1960	166,689	58,782	41.0	10.1
	1970	139,720	50,020	38.2	6.5
	1980	115,435	39,246	30.6	4.8
	1990	95,732	30,086	18.6	3.0
	2000	82,026	28,659	17.7	2.0

*Source: US Bureau of the Census [USBC] 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000.

Columbus ranked last at 3.9%.

Nationwide the percentage of foreign-born declined from 14.7% in 1910 to 4.8% in 1970, after which it increased to 10.4% in 2000 (Hansen and Bachu 1995; Schmidley 2001). The percentage of foreign-born in Ohio's largest cities paralleled somewhat national trends. In all cities, with the exception of Columbus, the percentage foreign-born was highest in 1940 and declined each decade to 1990, after which it slightly increased. For example, Cleveland's percentage foreign-born declined from 20.5% in 1940 to 4.1% in 1990 and then increased to 4.5% in 2000. Columbus was similar to the other cities in Ohio in that it experienced a decline in the percentage foreign-born between 1940 and 1970, but then the percentage grew to 6.7% in 2000. By 2000, Columbus ranked highest in the state in percentage of foreign-born population, surpassing Cleveland as the leading destination for immigrants in Ohio.

Also there are some notable differences in the foreign-born populations of Cleveland and Columbus, such as the year of entry. In the case of Cleveland, 25.9% of the foreign-born entered between 1995 and 2000, versus 50% for Columbus (US Bureau of the Census [USBC] 2000). Conversely 18.7% of the foreign-born residents of Cleveland entered the United States prior to 1965 compared to only 6.6% in Columbus (USBC 2000). In general, a higher percentage of the foreign-born population of Columbus is more recent immigrants than those in Cleveland.

The place of birth data also reflect Cleveland's role as a destination in older immigration streams. In the early 1900s, 85% of the immigrants to the United States came from Europe, but the largest origins of immigrants had shifted to Latin America, Asia, and Africa by the late 1900s (Singer 2004, p 3). Yet Cleveland's largest foreign-born source in 2000 was still Europe, which accounted for 41.2% of the total, in contrast to only 14.7% in Columbus (Table 2). Columbus' primary source of foreign-born, on the other hand, was Asia and Africa, which is the place of birth for 46.8% and 20.0% of the foreign-born, respectively, as compared to 29.1% and 5.0% of the total in Cleveland.

TABLE 2

*Place of birth of foreign-born population.**

Place of Birth	Cleveland % of Total	Columbus % of Total
Europe	41.2	14.7
Asia	29.1	46.8
Africa	5.0	20.0
Latin America	22.4	15.5

*Source: US Bureau of the Census [USBC] 2000.

Economic Trends

Historically, manufacturing has fostered the growth of Ohio's cities. As Dockery and others (1997, p 46) noted about "Metropolitan Ohio": "Manufacturing was a way of life and the creators of massive manufacturing companies were inseparable from urban life." In 1940, manufacturing accounted for a high percentage of the employment in Ohio's cities, ranging from a high of 48.3% in Akron to a low of 24% in Columbus.

Since 1940, however, employment and spatial restructuring has occurred in the American economy (Stanback 2002). This process has taken a toll on manufacturing in Ohio's urban centers. Manufacturing establishments closed in the cities and moved to the suburbs, or totally out of Ohio, substantially reducing the role of manufacturing in the urban economies (Dockery and others 1997). As Warf and Holly (1997, p 211) noted: "Many large multi-establishment firms in mature industries, increasingly mobile in a competitive world economy and hampered by the high-cost, unionized labor of the Midwest, evacuated the decaying cities of the Great Lakes and northeastern United States to find greener pastures—and higher profits—in the Sunbelt or overseas." In Akron, Cincinnati, Dayton, and Youngstown, the percentage of the total employment in manufacturing diminished with each passing decade to the point that manufacturing accounted for less than 19% of total employment in 2000. In the case of Cleveland and Toledo, manufacturing's role in the employment base reached its apex in 1950 and then decreased to 18.2% and 18.4%, respectively, in 2000. On the other hand, Columbus peaked in 1960 at 23.0% and then decreased to 8.9% in 2000.

According to Dockery and others (1997), the loss in manufacturing jobs led to declines in population. As employment opportunities in manufacturing evaporated, people left Ohio to seek their fortunes elsewhere. In all of the Ohio cities, with the exception of Columbus, population peaked at various times during the study period and then declined. For example, Cleveland's population peaked at 912,840 in 1950 and then consistently declined to 478,393 in 2000. Similarly, Toledo's largest population was 384,067 in 1970 and has declined in each subsequent decade. In contrast, Columbus has continuously grown since 1940 and by 2000 had become the largest city in Ohio, surpassing Cleveland in that position (Table 1).

With the loss of manufacturing, Ohio's cities have been experiencing economic restructuring with growing employment in services. Despite these shifts, total employment in most of the cities has declined throughout all, or most, of the study period. For example, Cleveland's total employment peaked at 390,423 in 1950 and has declined since. Columbus is unique in that its total employment has consistently grown since 1940.

Population and employment indicators for Columbus between the 1950 and 2000 period were quite different from those of Cleveland. Even though Columbus, similar to Cleveland, experienced a decline in manufacturing in the 1950 to 2000 period, it is noteworthy that this decline was much less compared to that of Cleveland.

Specifically, Columbus' manufacturing employment declined from a high of approximately 25% in 1950 to about 10% in 2000. This represents a 15% decline compared to Cleveland's 22% drop in the same period. This 7% difference is deceptive since the number of people employed in manufacturing in Cleveland in 1950 was approximately 850,000 compared to only 400,000 in Columbus in the same year. Thus, Cleveland's loss is much higher in absolute terms. Moreover, Columbus has never been as dependent on manufacturing as Cleveland and other northern Ohio cities. For example, the largest percentage of total employment contributed by manufacturing in Columbus was 25.9% in 1960 as opposed to 40.8% in Cleveland in the same year. Thus, Columbus's manufacturing base coupled "with services and trade [has] given the Columbus economy a broad base that permitted it to weather the economic downturn of the 1970s, which had major negative impacts upon the northern Ohio Industrial cities" (Dockery and others 1997, p 62).

Relationship to Immigration

Because of low birth rates in the US, especially since the 1970s, immigration has become a major contributor to US population growth. Unsurprisingly, the increases in the US foreign-born population since 1970 are some of the largest ever recorded (Greenwood and McDowell 1999). However, the internal distribution of the country's foreign-born population differs significantly among US regions, states, and cities, including those of Ohio (Katz 2002). Simultaneously, because of economic restructuring and the attendant expansion of the service and information sectors of the economy, US immigration policy has tended to put a premium on highly skilled workers, as evidenced for instance, in the 1990 Immigration Act's doubling of employment based visas to an annual 140,000. Thus, for cities to attract immigrants to stabilize or grow their populations and thrive in the postindustrial economy, they must create and strengthen conditions that are attractive to immigrants. The different fortunes of Columbus and Cleveland, OH, are a good illustration of this reality.

Columbus's ability to attract immigrants is due to interactions among the changing nature of recent US immigration and the city's economic base. Most of the immigrants who were arriving in the US between the 1890s and mid-1960s were from Southern and Eastern Europe, were generally poorly educated, and were employed in low-skill occupations, such as manufacturing assembly lines (Greenwood and McDowell 1999). Thus northern industrial cities such as Cleveland became leading immigrant gateways (Katz 2003). Conversely, less industrialized cities, such as Columbus, were never major immigrant destinations. As the US deindustrialized, however, the northern manufacturing centers lost their appeal to immigrants, while service centers, such as Columbus, increased their attractiveness.

The deindustrialization of the US and the advent of the service and information economy have been accompanied with significant changes in immigration trends. The post-1970 wave of immigration to the US is more diverse in its skill, composition, and origin (Greenwood and McDowell 1999). For example, Martin and Midgley (2003, p 23) estimated that 34% of the arrivals since 1990 had not completed high school. While most of the current unskilled immigrant stream is drawn largely from Latin America, some also come from Asia and Africa. These people work predominantly in the urban service sector, in the labor-intensive industries of the newly industrialized south and western parts of the country, or in agriculture (Johnson-Webb 2002). In addition to unskilled immigrants, the US has attracted highly skilled immigrants. For example, in his discussion of Asian immigration, Frazier (2003, p 92) observed: "Growth in the 1990s also required an increasingly educated workforce in various types of technological fields, such as bioengineering, microelectronics, and computer programming. All of these requirements fueled Asian immigration to the U.S…" This new immigration stream is drawn from other regions as well as Asia and is located in the faster growing high tech or information/service centers across the US, such as Austin, TX, or in smaller regional centers, such as Columbus, OH.

Columbus has a greater concentration of jobs in the growing employment sectors than most Ohio cities, including Cleveland. Thus, whereas 6.6% of the labor force in Columbus in 2000 was employed in professional, scientific, and technical services, only 3.4% of Cleveland's labor force was employed in those industries (USBC 2000). As another example, in 2000, 4.0% of the Columbus labor force worked in information services as compared to 2.5% in Cleveland (USBC 2000). Although it is not high tech, Stanback (2002) reported that retail trade was a growth sector for employment between 1974 and 1990. Accordingly, retail trade accounted for 13.5% of Columbus' employment base in 2000 as opposed to 9.9% in Cleveland; this difference is partly due to Columbus' higher income levels (USBC 2000).

Immigration to Columbus has also been influenced by the refugee resettlement policies of the US government, especially in the case of Somalis. Following the collapse of Somalia in the early 1990s, the United States became a major recipient of refugees from that country. Many of the Somali refugees to the US were resettled in various US cities, notably Minneapolis-St. Paul and Columbus (Horst 2004). Although a larger group of these refugees were initially settled in Minneapolis-St. Paul, secondary migration triggered by Columbus' vibrant economy and by Somali social networks have transformed Columbus into the second largest center of Somalis in the US after Minneapolis-St. Paul. According to some estimates, there are now over 20,000 Somalis in Columbus, OH (OCDC 2003), and nearly twice that many in Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN.

DISCUSSION

Historically, Ohio's manufacturing cities, such as Cleveland, were major destinations for immigrants, but that appeal has diminished since 1940. In addition, Cleveland, which had been the major destination for foreign-born persons in 1940, has been overshadowed by Columbus.

In 1940, Cleveland was home to 34.7% of the foreign-born in Ohio as compared to 2.3% in Columbus (USBC 1940). By 2000, Columbus had 6.7% of the state's foreign-born as compared to 4.4% in Cleveland. This shift in the cities' roles is in part attributable to industrial restructuring eroding the manufacturing base of most Ohio cities, including Cleveland. In contrast, Columbus has experienced continuous population and employment growth due to its having a greater concentration of jobs in the growing employment sectors than does Cleveland. Columbus's diverse employment opportunities are more attractive to the newer streams of immigrants, who no longer seek jobs in only manufacturing industries.

Ohio cities' ability to attract immigrants, who are critical to population and economic growth, depends on the cities' ability to nurture industries, such as the service and information sectors, that will generate the jobs to draw immigrants. Moreover, many researchers believe that amenities, such as cafes, museums, and diversity, are necessary to attract migrants, both local and foreign-born (Florida 2002). Thus, investments in the cultural environment and human talent cannot be overlooked. To date, many Ohio cities have tended to lag behind in this area, making the state less attractive to immigrants in general.

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